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Defense for a New Era: Lessons of the Persian Gulf War

John A. Walgreen

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little space even for Nelson and ignoring the leverage of British sea power over the French in the New World.

Many of these chapters are almost without naval slant. The chapters on World Wars I and II have more detailed descriptions of the land forces and strategies than of naval. Gallipoli, for example, is only mentioned in passing, and some naval references are only included to prove the thesis of sea versus land forces. Although there are some interesting descriptions of the disposition of German divisions between the Eastern and Western fronts, Gray does not fully develop his thesis of the counter-use of the sea. Readers from the Army War College would not be convinced of the leverage of sea power.

Some naval omissions are glaring. Submarine warfare is barely mentioned, which is strange in that submarine *guerre de course* has been a land power's greatest weapon against sea powers. Naval air power is also omitted. The U.S. Navy's war in the Pacific is similarly slighted, although it involved two sea powers; Gray has it that Japan was actually a land power and had most of its forces in China and Manchuria. Most American contributions, in fact, are given rather short shrift.

Most disappointing, however, is the very short chapter on the Cold War. It is really just a discussion of what might have been—a U.S.-Soviet nuclear war. Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm are all lumped together in a single sentence! The leverage of sea power was crucial in Korea and certainly useful in both Vietnam and Desert Storm. In any case,

how can anyone write about sea power in the post-World War II period without quoting the Brookings study on crisis response? Finally, although this work is based on history, it might have nonetheless been interesting to have Colin Gray's opinions on the use of sea power in the new post-Cold War era; none is forthcoming.

In short, if you already have Colin Gray's *Seapower and Strategy*, you can probably skip *Leverage*, and if not, get the original.

JAMES L. GEORGE
author, *The U.S. Navy in the 1990s:
Alternatives for Action*

Aspin, Les and Dickinson, William.
*Defense for a New Era: Lessons of the
Persian Gulf War*. Washington, D.C.:
Brassey's (US), 1992. 93pp. (No
price given)

This brief work is the product of a study of the Persian Gulf War initiated by Les Aspin and William Dickinson when they were, respectively, the chairman and the ranking Republican member of the House Armed Services Committee. It was originally published by Congress as a memorandum for members of the committee. This book is significant not only for understanding military operations in the Persian Gulf War but also for what the lessons of that war imply for future U.S. defense budgets and strategy. Aspin and Dickinson enumerate key findings from the operations in the Persian Gulf and note issues for the future of the U.S. defense establishment.

The Persian Gulf War must rate as one of the most successful military

operations in U.S. history. Aspin and Dickinson identify reasons why the U.S.-led coalition had such great success in expelling Iraqi forces from Kuwait and defeating them in battle. As any viewer of television news must be aware, the artful application of air power was a key element. Centralized control of fixed-wing aircraft through the Joint Forces Air Component Commander was found to be important in optimizing the use of air assets; but such centralized control was not without its problems. The Marines felt that not enough missions were devoted to battlefield preparation, and over time Marine aircraft were diverted from centralized control so that more ground support missions could be flown.

In spite of the highly successful air campaign, however, ground forces were necessary to push the Iraqi army out of Kuwait. The success of U.S. Army and Marine units owed much to the clever use of deception, by which the Iraqi army was led to expect an amphibious invasion of Kuwait City and kept six divisions on Kuwaiti beaches and thus out of the fight. Notwithstanding, if an amphibious invasion had taken place, it would have been jeopardized by Iraqi minefields. The U.S. and its allies were handicapped in dealing with the mine threat because of incomplete intelligence (resulting in damage to the USS *Princeton* and the USS *Tripoli*) and problems with U.S. minesweeping and countermeasures equipment. Aspin and Dickinson identify mine countermeasures capability as

one of the issues for the future which need to be addressed by the U.S. Navy.

Overall, the authors conclude that the great success of American land and air forces was based largely on the effective use of advanced technology. As examples they discuss precision guided munitions, better target acquisition and fire control, use of the Global Positioning System for land navigation, and night-vision equipment, which permitted twenty-four-hour combat operations. Although high-technology equipment made a major difference in fighting the Gulf War, high-quality people were just as important, or even more so. The war tested the All Volunteer Force, which replaced the draft in the early 1970s, and showed "the wisdom of recruiting a professional military and maintaining exacting and realistic peacetime training schedules." This major conclusion should be kept in mind as post-Cold War defense budgets cut into personnel and funds for training.

The use of reserve components showed the contributions they can make under conditions short of general mobilization. Aspin and Dickinson devote over a quarter of their book to the role of the reserves and find both successes and problems. One major difficulty in using them was that pre-war mobilization planning focused on use of the reserves in a Nato European scenario, not in circumstances like the Gulf War. Mobilization therefore was incremental and improvised, and experiences differed among the services. The major contributions of Army

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reserve components were made by combat support and combat service support units like the military police, civil affairs, medical, and transportation groups. Three mechanized infantry and armor brigades were eventually mobilized, but training kept them from the theater. However, two reserve field artillery brigades fought well in Desert Storm. The Marines mobilized much of their selected reserve, including combat units. The combat units fought well, but generally in no larger than company-size units. The lack of support troops in the Marines, both active and reserve, resulted in a number of Marine support units being assigned duties which were not their normal missions. As for the Air Force, even before official mobilization, reserve components were supporting Desert Shield in areas such as airlift and refueling operations. These units played an essential role, and three reserve combat squadrons also were employed effectively. The Navy used fewer reservists than the other services and emphasized individual skills more than unit capabilities. Most of the reservists mobilized were medical personnel, about half of the Navy's medical reservists. They made it possible for the Navy to provide over half the hospital beds supporting the Central Command. Naval reserve minesweeping ships also accounted for much of the Navy's minesweeping strength in the Persian Gulf.

The items discussed above do not exhaust the topics addressed in *Defense for a New Era*. This book will not provide the reader with a detailed analysis

of the strategy and tactics of the Persian Gulf War, but no better source is available to highlight major lessons learned and their implications for the future of the United States military establishment.

JOHN A. WALGREEN
Wheaton College

Ward, Nigel D. *Sea Harrier over the Falklands: A Maverick at War*. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1992. 299pp. \$25.95

Commander Nigel "Sharkey" Ward commanded 801 Sea Harrier Squadron embarked in HMS *Invincible* during the 1982 Falklands War. In this work he recalls his experiences before and during the war in order to convey a sense of what it is like to be a fighter pilot in battle, something he believes is essential to understanding the air war in the Falklands.

The publisher calls the book an "extraordinary first hand account," and in many ways it is. Authoritative descriptions of the mental and physical work performed by a fighter pilot in flight and genuinely exciting combat scenes give the book its immediacy and much of its appeal. Particularly vivid and memorable is the picture of *Invincible* under missile attack, as witnessed from the cockpit of a Sea Harrier helplessly chained to the ship's deck. "It was a magnificent sight, one always to be remembered."

Throughout the narrative, Ward vigorously argues two themes. First, the Sea Harrier demonstrated exceptional performance and made a vital contribution to the successful outcome of the